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LATIN AMERICA

9. Castro Now Prepared for Early Seizure of Western Refineries: Fidel Castro now sees no obstacle to the early seizure of three large Western oil refineries in Cuba, according to a usually reliable source. On 6 June the one British and two US-owned companies simultaneously refused the Castro government's order to process Soviet crude oil being received in exchange for sugar under the Cuban-Soviet trade agreement.

Arrangements evidently are being made with Aristotle Onassis, owner of some of the world's largest tankers, to supply Cuba's internal POL needs of about 60,000 barrels per day. The petroleum would almost certainly come from the USSR.

The refineries normally import about 75,000 barrels per day from Venezuela--some to be processed for export--and the Venezuelan minister of mines was quoted on 17 June as saying that if Cuba reduced these purchases it could not count on access to Venezuelan crude oil in the future.

The Castro regime continues its pressures on other American companies also. In addition to those being brought to bear on the International Harvester Company by the Cuban National Bank, the National Agrarian Reform Institute has asked the company to train mechanics to assemble tractors being imported from the USSR and Czechoslovakia. The local manager believes that refusal to comply would result in seizure and hopes that other tractor distributors will also refuse.

On 16 June Castro reiterated to restaurant and hotel workers that the recent seizure of American-operated luxury hotels was necessitated by US efforts to sabotage Cuba's tourist industry. He promised that the hotels would be put on a paying basis for the benefit of the workers and Cuba, but did not explain how this is to be done. Efforts to attract tourists from the rest of Latin America have not been any more successful than similar efforts in the US. Cuban official and quasi-official groups are evidently paying most of the expenses for Latin Americans and others brought to Cuba to see the "true benefits" of the revolution.

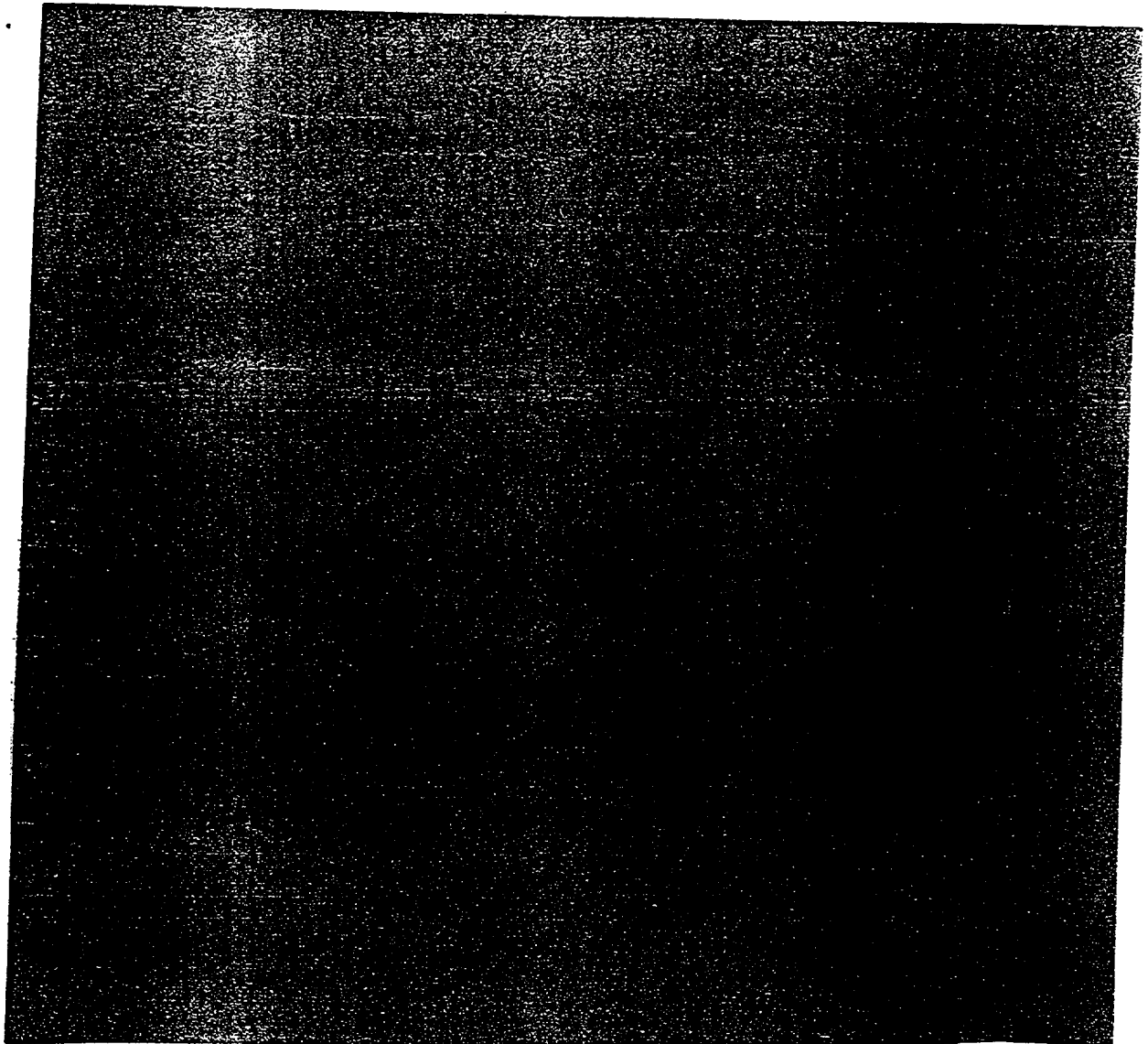
Cuban agrarian reform institute director Antonio Nunez Jimenez told TASS on 17 June that Castro will visit Moscow

at an unspecified date. Nunez was also quoted by TASS as hoping Khrushchev's intended visit to Cuba might come on 26 July, anniversary date of Castro's revolutionary movement.

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